

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Somotrichus unifasciatus (Dejean) (Carabidae) in Britain. – The purpose of this note is to detail all the available British records of this species, which is not uncommon in museum collections, and likely to cause difficulties for anyone attempting to name undetermined specimens using existing keys to the British fauna.

Somotrichus unifasciatus (Dejean) is a distinctive carabid (Fig. 1), 3–4.5 mm in length, orange-brown, with a broad black or chocolate brown band across the elytra. In some specimens, this band extends along the elytral suture to the base of the scutellum. It is quite a broad, dorso-ventrally depressed species. The elytra are clothed in fine testaceous hairs, as well as numerous long erect setae.

This species has a cosmopolitan distribution, and through the assistance of man, occurs virtually worldwide. It was originally described from Mauritius, with holotypes from Malaya (mainland Malaysia) but its true natural origins are not known. However, it was found in accumulated bat droppings in a cave in Ivory Coast, West Africa (Woodroffe & Halstead, 1959) who also state that 'it is frequently imported into this country on Brazil nuts, but has not yet established in the open'.

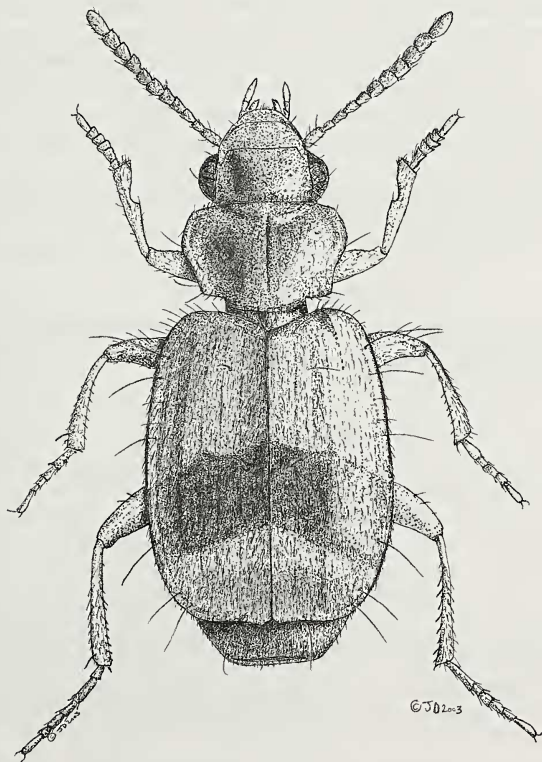


Fig. 1. *Habitus Somotrichus unifasciatus* (Dejean). $\times 18$ J. Denton.

It is predatory on other insects, and frequently found in ships and docks in cargo (especially ground nuts and brazil nuts, see below). Modern control procedures have severely reduced insect infestation of cargoes and this may explain why there have been no records since the 1950s.

It has turned up on a number of occasions in the British Isles with some evidence of breeding, but has not become permanently established. It is not included in the British Checklist (Pope, 1977) but it has occurred far more frequently than many other imported beetle species such as *Dendrophilus xavieri* Marseul (Histeridae) which are.

British Records of *S. unifasciatus*

Zoological Gardens, Regents Park, London (Stephens, 1839).

Cheshire, in Bone Works taken by B.R. Lucas of Northwich, in debris and rat droppings in a bone mill (Walker, 1916).

Dundee, Forfar (in a bag of crushed bones on the dockside) see Hinton (1945).

Leith, Edinburgh, xii.1944 in palm kernels from West Africa (K.G. Smith). See (Woodroffe & Halstead, 1959).

Battersea, Surrey, vii.1945–xi.1945, breeding in the basement of the Hovis Mills (J.L. Henderson) six specimens in British Entomological and Natural History Society (BENHS) collection at Dinton Pastures in Berkshire.

'Faversham, East Kent, xi–xii.1953'. (A.M. Masee) in sacks for apple packing. At least 20 specimens some in the BENHS coll. and others in the Natural History Museum, London main collections.

'London, Oct 1953, in sack of Brazil Nuts' BENHS Coll.

'Hull Docks, South-East Yorkshire, in Brazil nuts 24.vii.1957', 'BPM', BENHS coll.

Liverpool Docks, West Lancashire, in Brazil nuts, from Manaus, Brazil, 26.vi.1958 (Woodroffe & Halstead, 1959).

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